



# AVIAN INFLUENZA

## *International Partnership To Meet A Global Threat*

*"If left unchallenged, this virus could become the first pandemic of the 21st century.  
We must not allow that to happen..."*

– President George W. Bush

The U.S. Government is concerned that the ongoing outbreaks of avian influenza in birds have the potential to turn into a human influenza pandemic that would have significant global health, economic, and social consequences. It has allocated \$3.8 billion in emergency funding to address the threat of avian and pandemic influenza domestically and internationally.

### WORLDWIDE PROBLEM

To date, outbreaks of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza have been confirmed among birds in nearly 50 countries. The World Health Organization reports around 200 human cases and over 100 deaths. Avian influenza has occasionally spread from bird to human, but there is no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission at this time. An effective vaccine for humans has not yet been approved.

### THE U.S. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY

On November 1, 2005, President Bush unveiled his National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza, a plan to strengthen the Government's ability to safeguard the American people in the event of a global pandemic. The President's strategy is designed to detect outbreaks worldwide, stockpile drugs, improve the capacity to produce new vaccines, and prepare to respond. The Implementation Plan for the National Strategy identifies coordinated federal preparedness and response actions.

The Department of State was assigned the lead role for coordinating the U.S. Government's international efforts. In March 2006, the Department established the Avian Influenza Action Group, which – in close collaboration with the Departments of Health and Human Services,

Agriculture, Homeland Security, Defense, the U.S. Agency for International Development and other agencies – leads the Department's international engagement on avian and pandemic influenza.

### INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

President Bush announced the International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza during the UN General Assembly in September 2005. Its goals are to:

- Elevate the avian influenza issue on national agendas;
- Coordinate efforts among donor and affected nations;
- Mobilize and leverage resources;
- Increase transparency in disease reporting and the quality of surveillance; and
- Build local capacity to identify, contain and respond to an influenza pandemic.

The first meeting of the Partnership took place October 6-7 in Washington, DC. Top officials from 88 countries and eight international organizations committed themselves to work together to combat avian and pandemic influenza.

Topic areas included: surveillance and prevention; preparedness, planning and outreach; and response and containment of avian influenza.

### ASSISTANCE FOR AFFECTED COUNTRIES

At an international donors' conference in Beijing in January, the global community pledged \$1.9 billion to combat avian influenza worldwide. The United States pledged \$334 million for overseas programs to help fund develop national plans, diagnostics and lab capacity, stockpiles of protective equipment, communication and other needs.



# UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT ON AVIAN INFLUENZA

The United States is working with countries around the world and key international organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), to assist in the preparation, surveillance, and response to the threat of avian and pandemic influenza. Following are highlights of international actions taken by various agencies of the U.S. Government to address this global challenge.

At the Beijing donors' conference in January 2006, the global community pledged \$1.9 billion to combat avian influenza (AI) worldwide. The United States pledged more than any other nation. Our contribution of \$334 million is being used for overseas programs to:

1. Develop national plans
2. Support development of diagnostics and laboratory capacity
3. Stockpile protective equipment and emergency health commodities
4. Conduct international communications campaigns and public outreach activities
5. Support the work of the WHO and the FAO

- Through the Security and Prosperity Partnership, the United States is collaborating with Canadian and Mexican counterparts on a comprehensive North American Pandemic Influenza Strategy.
- USAID continues to fund communication campaigns in 34 countries to inform the general public how they can reduce their risk of exposure and infection.
- The Department of Health and Human Services has added influenza activities to

## PREPAREDNESS

- In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other partners, the United States is funding activities to develop and support national task forces and preparedness plans in at least 46 countries.
- U.S. Government agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and the Interior, as well as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), have sent scientists, veterinarians, and emergency managers to affected and at-risk countries to build capacity to test and diagnose AI in animals; to consult on poultry surveillance and vaccination programs; and to advise on emergency plans and procedures.

existing global disease detection efforts operating in Kenya and Thailand.

- U.S. technical health and agriculture staff posted in countries and international organizations around the globe are helping nations prepare and respond to AI outbreaks.

## SURVEILLANCE AND RESEARCH

- The United States is supporting efforts to develop animal surveillance and build diagnostic and laboratory capacity in at least 25 countries.
- In 2004, the United States launched the Influenza Genome Sequencing Project. As of April 10, 2006, 1053 human isolates influenza genome sequences have been made publicly available.
- The United States is working with Pasteur Institute;

the Gorgas Institute and the Ministry of Health of Panama; and most recently, the International Center for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh on influenza and other emerging infectious diseases, including the enhancing of surveillance capacity, laboratory testing, diagnosis, and treatment.

- Veterinarians and poultry experts from several AI affected countries are being trained at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa, to safely and effectively test animal specimens for AI.
- U.S. scientists have worked with Vietnamese counterparts to analyze AI viruses and with Cambodian counterparts to enhance wild bird surveillance techniques.
- USAID is providing \$29 million for animal and human surveillance efforts in Asia, the Near East, Europe, Eurasia, and Africa. USAID is also supporting community-level early warning networks in several countries to enhance the ability of affected countries to rapidly detect H5N1 outbreaks in animals and humans.
- The United States continues to send experts on migratory birds, their movements and disease epidemiology to international conferences to strengthen international research efforts.
- The U.S. Government regulates the importation of

From its pledge of \$334 million made at the Beijing donors' conference, the U.S. has thus far provided more than \$100 million for AI preparedness and response to affected and at-risk countries, the World Health Organization, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, and private sector partners.

U.S. Agency for International Development ...\$54 million  
 Department of Health and Human Services ...\$35 million  
 Department of Agriculture .....\$10.5 million  
 Department of State .....\$1 million

wild birds for the pet trade, research, and other purposes.

## RESPONSE

■ To date, the United States has deployed over 36,000 sets of personal protective equipment for use by first responders to outbreaks in 22 countries in Asia and the Near East, Europe and Eurasia, and Africa.

■ In cooperation with the WHO, U.S. experts

participated in investigations into human cases of AI in Indonesia, China, and Turkey, and are providing substantial technical assistance, in cooperation with the FAO, for influenza containment in countries that have experienced animal outbreaks. The United States is providing expertise and funding to assist the FAO to develop a Crisis Management Center that will facilitate their ability to mount and coordinate international rapid response to AI outbreaks worldwide.

- The U.S. is working with the FAO to train first responders to contain an animal outbreak and enhance the capacity of ministries of agriculture to manage response efforts.
- USAID and the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services have provided material support to affected countries including laboratory equipment, reagents, sample shipping containers, and personal protective equipment for veterinarians and field technicians.
- The U.S. military is cooperating in the creation of U.S. rapid response teams, has planned military-to-military training and exercises, and is assisting other countries in developing military preparedness and response plans.

